

# Home Magazine

## A BOARD WALK TRAGEDY.

BY AMY POINDEXTER.

ON the night of March 16, 1888, a tall and rather thick-set man might have been seen making his way with careful steps along a narrow board walk which bridged a ravine three or four feet beneath. The night was dark, and possibly the traveler was somewhat uncertain of his footing, for he swung a lighted lantern in front of him and glanced restlessly from side to side. He appeared nervous and tried to whistle a tune, but his lips refused, and his face looked almost ghastly in the flickering light.

Midway on the bridge he paused a moment, as if listening, then turned and partly faced in the direction from which he had come. "Not halfway over this walk," he muttered, and continued his journey. Suddenly there came a sound that made his blood run cold, and again he paused. But this time he was struck by a heavy blow and fell. The lantern crashed upon the boards and the light went out. A stealthy noise was heard near the fallen figure, and then all was still.

Early the next morning a party of workmen, with their dinner pails swinging on their arms, walked over the same bridge. They were whistling merrily or cracking jokes that provoked laughter. "Well, I'll declare!" said one of them, stopping short in a listening attitude. "I believe I heard something."

"Course you did, Bobby," said another. "You heard me. I was tellin' you the rattlenest good story about!"

But Bobby was paying no attention. He had jumped from the bridge and was crawling underneath. His friend stood still a moment and then heard his name called in a voice of the utmost horror.

"Good heavens, Sam!" it said; "come down here quick; there's a dead man here!"

The other man sprang from the walk. Underneath they saw a man stretched out apparently asleep, with no blood stains or sign of wound about him. Bobby was bending over him in a sort of daze. "Boys," he said huskily, "boys, it's the boss."

"What, not Mr. Barlow?"

"Yes, that's who it is. Come help me get him up; perhaps he isn't quite dead."

So they lifted the man up and laid him tenderly on the grass. His clothing was in perfect condition, with the exception of the mud that encrusted a part of it, and only a small red and black spot on the left temple showed that he had been hurt.

Bobby despatched the other three for a doctor, the Coroner and the assistant manager of the mill. The doctor and Coroner came in good time, but Sam, who had been sent for the manager, said that Mr. Ashland had left the night before for a week's fishing, and that he might make a few business trips for the firm.

There was quite a stir in the newspapers about his death, but there seemed to be no clue to the murderer. Mrs. Barlow, however, found a young man of her acquaintance and promised him a large reward if he would find the man who had killed her husband.

About a month or so after Mr. Barlow's death Mr. Ashland, who was now the manager, made a strange discovery, which he imparted to the heads of the firm.

In looking over the business accounts he found that about \$15,000 in government bonds was missing. These bonds he was sure had been put in the back vault the evening of the murder. The lock of the vault had in no way been tampered with, and other contents were in perfect order.

Pulsifer and Wilson, the heads of the firm, were greatly disturbed by this news, because Mr. Barlow was the only person besides themselves who had any knowledge of the bonds, and they had been sent to him personally.

"I can't begin to see what this means, Billy," said Mr. Pulsifer to his junior partner, Wilson, as he walked the floor after Ashland's telegram. "It evidently has something to do with Barlow's murder, but just what I do not know."

A day or two after that Mr. Ashland was surprised to receive a visit from Mr. Wilson.

"Is it in connection with that bond affair?" he asked, giving his guest the desk chair.

"Yes," said Billy. "The fact of the matter is, Ashland, we don't think the bonds were sent to Barlow at all. There must have been some mistake about it."

"You don't say so," said he. "All I know about is that there was entered in Barlow's private books \$15,000 Government bonds. I started for Murryville about the bonds, for I think we shall find that out and so don't know a thing about them."

"Well, Mr. Pulsifer and I have talked it over and decided that Mr. Barlow's death had nothing to do with their disappearance. You needn't say anything to the bonds, for I think we shall find that out. I am here I may as well stay a day or so and look over the mill machinery, &c."

"Certainly, certainly," said Mr. Ashland. "It would be a thousand pities for you to go without doing so."

So Mr. Ashland left his work and accompanied Mr. Wilson in a tour of the mill. Their progress was rather slow, as Ashland was lame and walked with a cane. Everywhere the machinery was buzzing merrily.

The men in overalls and jumpers were quite as busy, though not as merry. Ashland was not a man to make many friends, and while Billy smiled and spoke to every man he nodded now and then in dignified silence. Billy in turn received smiles and pleasant

greetings, while Ashland was coldly recognized. Billy noticed this and was not pleased, for where the manager is not loved as well as respected there is apt to be trouble. One man in particular attracted his attention by the deeply scowling look he cast at Ashland.

"I'll look that man up," said Billy to himself. Aloud he said: "Well, Ashland, I guess we have gone far enough to-day, but to-morrow I will come early and we can finish. In the mean time if you want me I will be at the only hotel in town."

To reach the hotel Billy crossed the walk under which Barlow was found. He shivered to think such a horrible deed had been committed and the criminal still lived unpunished. A white object pressed against his friend Pulsifer will have me changed from junior partner to chief detective for the firm. And sticking the handcuffs into his pocket he walked on.

That evening he decided to remain indoors, and lying on a lounge, luxuriously smoking and planning his detective campaign, he was somewhat disturbed when he heard a knock at the door. "Come in," he said testily, and much to his surprise the man he had no need at the mill stood before him. "You are Mr. Wilson," he asked the man in a hesitating manner.

"Yes, certainly," said Billy, jumping up. "What can I do for you?"

"My name is Silas," said the man; "Silas Jinks, and I came to talk to you about Mr. Barlow's murder. Do you know who did it?"

"I have my suspicions," said Billy, and if you will give me time I will tell you. "Time?" said Billy. "My good friend, you have all night, but take a seat."

It was nearly morning when they finished talking, and instead of going to bed Billy put on his hat and went out with Jinks. Their destination was the police headquarters, and there they had a long talk with the chief of police, who to all appearances agreed with them in every particular. Then Billy went back to his room and slept until broad daylight.

Immediately after breakfast he went to the mill and found Mr. Ashland there before him. He had evidently just arrived, for his hat and cane lay on his desk. Billy noticed the cane in a minute, for it was such a queer-shaped thing—like the crooked man's body in the nursery rhyme, with a silver ball for a handle. "Quite a remarkable cane," said Billy, lifting it from the desk. "Oh—and loaded," he added.

"Yes," said Ashland, "a very pretty cane, a weapon as well as a friend. It is doing this for me. I hope it may do you good, for you can prove—not one thing." Still gesticulating, or trying to, he was taken to the police station. As soon as possible Billy telegraphed Pulsifer: "I think the man is caught."

The trial of Ashland was set for the next month, and during all the time that intervened he still maintained that he knew nothing about the murder, and been out of town at the time. This did not dampen Billy's conviction that he was on the right track.

Mrs. Barlow was informed of the action taken and in turn gave the information which her detective had secured. He had examined the place of the murder

and found two footprints with a round hole near them, from which he inferred that the murderer carried a cane.

The prosecuting attorney, in stating the case, claimed that Ashland did not leave town at 5 o'clock on March 16. On the contrary his ticket, bought at 4.45, was used at 11.20 from the next village, five miles away. He had sent word home that he was going fishing and left the office at 4 o'clock with his grip.

The men who stopped work at 6 o'clock knew he was gone, and no one but Mr. Barlow remained in the office. Yet at 8.15 the next morning had seen him open the door of the office and go in. Mr. Barlow was still there and uttered an exclamation of dismay, loud enough for the watchman to hear. Silas Jinks, at that moment came through the hall, and Jinks, the watchman, motioned to him to make so much noise and to come near, but the man's purpose was to take a week's vacation and go fishing—fishing, you understand. Good-night."

"Why couldn't you tell me this? Am I not as trustworthy as yourself? Am I not the assistant manager? But, ha, ha! perhaps you were preparing to decamp with the bonds, and didn't want it known they had arrived. As I am apparently not necessary to the firm I will take a week's vacation and go fishing—fishing, you understand. Good-night."

Jinks and Murphy hastened to screen themselves, for Ashland was a tempestuous man and they didn't care to meet him after his angry interview. He stomped down the hall at a great rate, knocking the floor with his cane at every step, but the men's purpose was to do not go out the door. Instead, he went back peacefully and peered through the keyhole. After that he went to the other end of the hall, where there was one window, and the men saw him no more that night.

About 10 o'clock Mr. Barlow came out, and locking the office door walked down the hall. He carried a lighted lantern, as was his custom on dark nights, and made Murphy a pleasant good-night. The next morning the men heard of his death.

The prosecuting attorney claimed that Ashland had jumped from the hall window when Barlow left the place and had followed him to the plank walk, where he told him with a blow of his loaded cane and then dragged him under a walk and killed him. He continued, "that the murder was done for the purpose of robbery; that Yollo Ashland took \$15,000 in numbered government bonds that had been sold to the firm of Pulsifer & Wilson from the body of William Barlow, who carried them for safe keeping, fearing an attack by Ashland on the safe. I also claim that Yollo Ashland had his hands still, if not intact, at least nearly so. They were in a secret drawer, of which he had the key, in a desk on the second floor of his house in Beattie street."

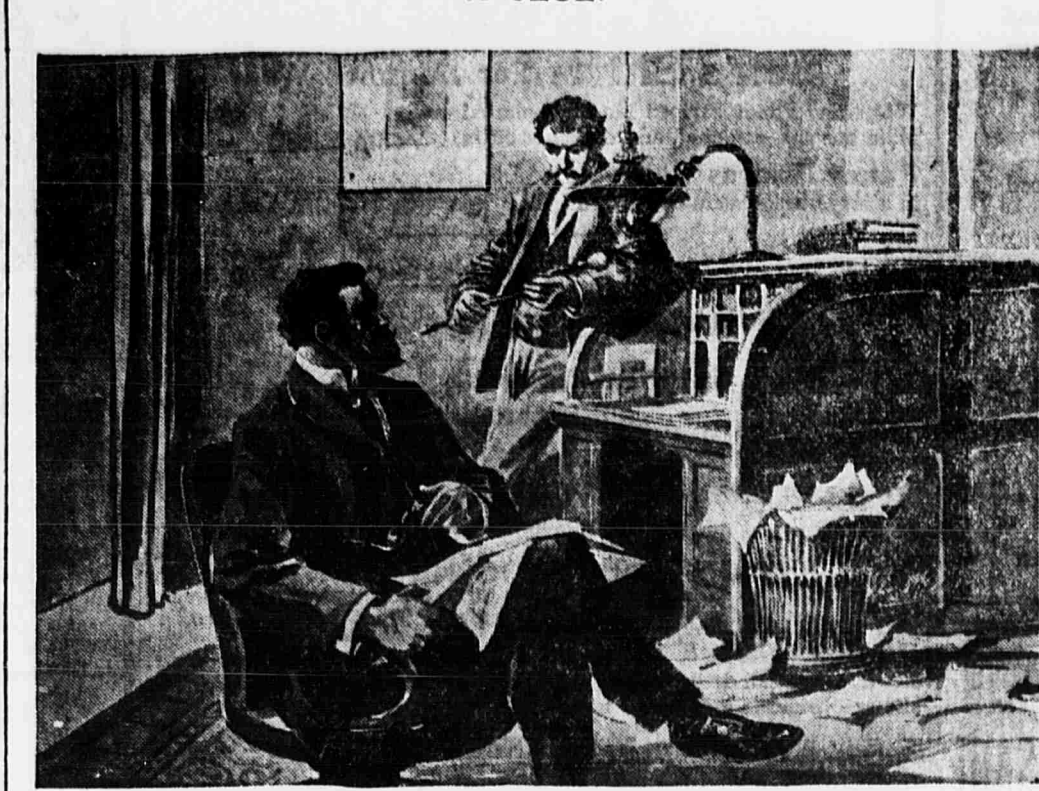
A messenger was promptly sent for the desk and Ashland's keys were demanded to unlock it. The attorney then unlocked the drawer, and there lay the bonds in a large, rubber-banded package, crusted with mud. The numbers on them corresponded to those bought by Pulsifer & Wilson.

After that it was hardly necessary to produce the other evidence. The counsel for the defense had very little to say and the jury was out about fifteen minutes, when it returned the verdict of murder in the first degree.

Capital punishment was not in force in that State, so the penalty was imprisonment for life.

When Ashland heard the verdict he sat with bowed head, crying like a child, and Billy, as he looked at him, vowed he would never play detective again.—St. Louis Star.

## A CLUE.



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## PRINCELY INCOMES OF CHILDREN.

The concert stage has proved a gold mine to several musical prodigies, among the latest of whom is Pepito Rodriguez, the marvelous young pianist, says the St. Louis Republic. Five years ago he first saw the light at Ferrol, in Spain, and at the age of three he could play any air from memory which he had once heard. His parents made a regular musical education, yet last season he was being paid at the rate of \$500 to \$1,000 a night for his recitals in Paris, and has just contracted to give a series of fifty performances in the United States at \$1,500 apiece, so that it may be safely argued that by the time he is old enough to go to school he will have made a fortune that would turn many a wealthy city merchant green with envy.

At the age of ten Josef Hofmann was earning \$15,000 a year. He studied under Rubinstein and toured Europe, giving concerts in all the principal cities; but, sighing for a larger income, he crossed the "herring-pond" and gave 12 recitals, which brought him in a profit of \$60,000, and quite lately he retired to finish his education. Another marvellous youth, Otto Hogenberg, made a fortune of \$150,000 ere he was out of his teens and then retired; but, weary of doing nothing, he began to teach music at enormous fees, which aggregated the respectable total of \$200,000 a year.

The most successful child actor was undoubtedly the late W. H. Barry, nicknamed the Child Roscius. He went on the stage at the tender age of eight, and at eleven was starring at Covent Garden Theatre, London, and throughout Britain. So great was his popularity that for more than a year he made \$300

a night, and at sixteen retired, with a sum of \$200,000 to be educated. Fifty years after he reappeared, but his popularity had waned, and he very wisely vanished into private life again and lived on his early-acquired fortune.

Italy is justly proud of her boy sculptor, Victor Righetti, who was making the enormous sum of \$200,000 per annum when only ten years of age. Long before he could walk Righetti was modeling figures that sold for \$250 each, and, although not yet out of his teens, he is making a larger income than any other Italian sculptor, while some of his most recent work has been mentioned in the same breath with Michael Angelo.

William Horner, of Cornwall Landing, this State, is the cleverest billiard player for his age that ever lived, and, although he has yet to see his twelfth birthday, his income has averaged \$350 a week for some time past. He has toured through Europe and defeated such masters of the game as Ben Layton, Ben Roughes and Vescovo, who is said to be the finest player living. At Greene's Academy, Chicago, recently his highest average was 83, making an unfinished run of 156 at 14-inch ball line.

Another marvel, though in a totally different direction, is Will Gwin, the boy surgeon. Before he could walk he was present at all the operations his father—himself a clever surgeon—undertook, and not long ago he gained his certificate at the New Orleans University, the examiners stating that he was the cleverest osteologist they had ever met. Though only six years of age, he is consulted by patients whose age is ten times his own, and his income runs well into four figures.

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## SOME GOOD SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.

Many of us would experience a distinct shock could our ordinary manner and method of conversation be laid before our eyes in all its unadorned nakedness. The human mind, especially in its uncultured stages, runs to excitement. Excitement of any kind thrills, emotion, and the calmer, contemplative subjects of the thinker are practically unintelligible to most of us. The world is full of beauty. There is the ever-changing sky above our heads, sifting down eternal suggestions of the unknowable, which the finite mind places beyond that wall of ether through which the far-off worlds peep as twinkling stars.

If the sky were shown us only at intervals of a century and a fortune in admission price were charged, would not the business of the world be stilled while we all struggled forth to gaze upon the wonder?

And would not the tales of the beautiful clouds heaped in morning splendor or radiant in the fading glory of the evening be told and retold during the hundred years' interval before the second seeing? Yet this beauty, this very spirit of beauty, which no words known to man may adequately describe, is before us day by day, hour by hour, never the same, never repeating, and we turn

our eyes from it to contemplate the picture of a human atom being turned by fingers long since turned to dust—yet we ignore them and seek subjects for our study and our conversation in the criminal columns of the daily papers, says the Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.